



Parish of St Peter & The Good Shepherd Bearsted & Harrietsham

A Member of Bearsted Area Churches Together



Newsletter

St Peter's Church, Button Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME15 8NJ

Church of The Good Shepherd, Rectory Lane (off East Street), Harrietsham, ME17 1HS

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More information:

Parish Website: www.catholic-bearsted.org.uk

Diocesan Website: www.rcsouthwark.co.uk

The Catholic Church in England and Wales: www.catholicchurch.org.uk

Prayer: www.life4seekers.co.uk; www.holyspiritinteractive.net

Catholic Schools in our local area:

St Francis' Primary, Queen's Road, Maidstone ME16 0LB (Telephone: 771540)

The Holy Family Primary, Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone ME15 9PS (Telephone: 756778)

St Simon Stock Catholic Secondary, Oakwood Park, Maidstone ME16 0JP (Telephone: 754551)

Year A

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

5th January 2014

FAITH IN FOCUS: MODERN-DAY MAGI The Epiphany is the feast of the catholicity of the Church. This means that the Church is for everyone, in all places and at all times. The opposite of catholic is exclusive. But the Church is not exclusive; it's all embracing and catholic. We don't stand like nightclub bouncers at our church entrances, deciding on who should be let in and who should be excluded. We stand there to welcome in anyone of any race, colour or creed who wants to know more about Jesus Christ, the God who became one of us. And so the wise men entered the stable at Bethlehem at the end of their star-led journey to find this new king and to pay him homage. The Magi from the East show that Christ's message was not just for the neighbours, but for the ends of the earth. Epiphany is Christ's manifestation to the whole world, far and wide.



We are all of us called on today to be both stars and wise men. It was a star that led the Magi to know where to find Jesus. In a world that seems so often to flounder in a sea of darkness we are called to shine, to shed our light on the difficult task of making sense of life. We are to offer the wisdom of God to a world that seeks true meaning. We must presume that, when the Magi left, they returned home to tell other people about what they had seen and heard. It would be pointless to keep it to themselves. So too with us. We cannot leave it to those with theology degrees to let the world know what a difference believing in Jesus makes. We must be Magi, wise men and women.

A simple test of how we are doing as Magi in the 21st century is to ask ourselves how many people we brought to Christ last year. What sort of advertisement are we for Christianity? Are we ashamed of the Good News or proud to let others know how much it means to us? And at the end of this new year how many people will we have led to Jesus by the light of the way we live? *(Author unknown)*

THANK YOU to all those who put so much effort into making our Christmas services really special: to those who arranged the beautiful flowers and decorations at both churches, to those who cleaned, those who served, those who led the music and those who took Communion to the housebound; indeed to all those who make our parish such a welcoming community, thank you! And thank you to those who do much of the background work in the parish throughout the year, helping it to function efficiently - work which is largely unnoticed but very much valued. God bless you all! ✨ The numbers attending Mass for Christmas were encouraging, with over 200 at the Christmas Vigil, 50 at Midnight and very full churches on both Christmas morning Masses. Let's try and keep it up for the new year! ✨ **PARISH POST** Parishioners wondering why they didn't receive a Christmas card from 'so and so' might find it in the box marked PARISH POST in the porch at St Peter's.

CHRISTMAS The Church's liturgical celebration of Christmas (the Nativity of the Lord) continues until next Sunday, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time before Lent begins on Monday 13th January, the First Week in Ordinary Time, ferial cycle 2 (weekday readings at Mass), psalter week 1 (Divine Office). Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 5th March.

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 6th JANUARY 2014
(Masses marked '(H)' are at Harrietsham)

✕ **The EPHPHANY of the LORD** ✕

Sun 5th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Nora Walton RIP
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		10.30am	✕ Mass
Mon 6th	Feria of Christmas Time	7.00pm	✕ Mass
Tues 7th	Feria of Christmas Time	10.00am	✕ Mass
Wed 8th	Feria of Christmas Time	(H) 10.00am	✕ Mass
Thu 9th	Feria of Christmas Time	7.00am	✕ Mass
Fri 10th	Feria of Christmas Time	10.00am	✕ Mass (usually followed by Exposition)
Sat 11th	Feria of Christmas Time	5:00-5:30pm	Confessions

✕ **The BAPTISM of the LORD (A)** ✕

Sun 12th	Saturday	6.00pm	✕ Vigil Mass
	Sunday	(H) 8.45am	✕ Mass: Peter Fraser RIP
		10.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo

ADVENT APPEAL 2013 The Advent Appeal this year is for the **Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter**. They are aiming to provide shelter for homeless people in Maidstone from 30th December until 23rd February. They are using seven churches in Maidstone between 7pm and 8am. They hope to support homeless people to move on to appropriate accommodation. They also hope they can continue this project in future years. **Thank you for your support which has so far raised £333**. It's not too late to donate given that the provision continues through to next month.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2014 Our children begin their preparations for First Holy Communion this Friday afternoon at St Peter's; sessions will continue during term time. Please remember the children and their families in your prayers, especially as they prepare for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation in March.

PLEASE PRAY...

- **With the Holy Father for January:** *That all may promote authentic economic development that respects the dignity of all peoples; and that Christians of diverse denominations may walk toward the unity desired by Christ.*
- **For all the sick** and for all who are unwell at home or in our care homes, especially, Cyril Adam, Barbara Casey and Nellie Marshall; for those recently dead; and for all those whose anniversaries occur about now. For all our relatives and friends.
- **For all those affected by the recent flooding in the UK:** for those whose homes were flooded and for those who were without power over the Christmas festivities.

Thank you for your offerings last week to help run our parish: **£306.47** (Gift Aided, **£173.10**. Weekly standing orders, paid direct into our bank amount to **£121.00**). ♦ We banked **£81** for CAFOD ♦ **Fr Geoff is very grateful for the generous offerings he received on Christmas Day:** the total more than matched inflation. ♦ **Crib offerings** are for the Cabrini Children's Society.

COFFEE at GOOD SHEPHERD Thank you to those who stayed for coffee after Mass the Sunday before Christmas: the organizers reported that we ran out of saucers! We will schedule this in again for Easter. Thank you to those who provided the coffee and eats!

CHRISTMAS CARDS (*From Joyce Gibson*) "A Big Thank You to all who supported my initiative to forego sending Christmas cards to other parishioners in favour of donating the money to the Homeless of Maidstone. Unfortunately I am unable to tell you how much was raised as the contents were stolen on Sunday 22nd December! After the parish room CCTV was examined, the police were called in and the culprits recognised [and subsequently apprehended]. However I doubt we will ever find out how much they took. I still think the idea was a good one and will repeat it next Christmas with better security arrangements. Again thank you for your support." *More on this incident as it comes in.*

CHURCHES TOGETHER There is to be a service for Christian Unity at the Methodist Church in Bearsted at 3pm on Sunday 19th January (during the Church Unity Octave of Prayer).